

## EXHIBIT 13a

The New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/09/realestate/elizabeth-street-garden-letter-campaign.html>

# The Garden Adds Color and Brightness to the City': Letters From P.S. 130 Students

Elementary school children have been writing letters to Mayor Eric Adams in an effort to save Elizabeth Street Garden, where the city is planning to build housing.

**By Anna Kodé Photographs by Yuvraj Khanna**

Anna Kodé reported this story from Elizabeth Street Garden and interviewed students of P.S. 130.

Aug. 9, 2024

When Dylan Sam, who just finished third grade at Public School 130 Hernando De Soto, found out that Elizabeth Street Garden was in danger of being demolished, he was shocked — and confused.

“Everyone spent time planting that garden, and it’s fresh air. If they take away fresh air, they’re taking away years from you,” said Dylan, 8. “I hope it stays, because it’s free fresh air — you don’t have to buy it.” (Trees, he went on to explain, absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen, hence the “free fresh air.”)

The fate of Elizabeth Street Garden — a once-vacant lot between Elizabeth, Mott, Prince and Spring Streets, in downtown Manhattan — has been in question for years. The garden, which opened to the public nearly two decades ago on land owned by the city, is a rare place to find peace and an element of whimsy in a busy, commercial neighborhood. Sculptures poke through the landscaping, and yoga classes and movie nights are held there. Every year, some 200,000 visitors stroll through the garden, according to the volunteer-based nonprofit group that runs it.

If the garden is destroyed, it will  
also destroy the happy future of kids.

Developers can just build at another place! You don't  
have to build on Elizabeth garden!

But in 2019, the City Council voted to approve plans to use the site to build affordable housing for senior citizens. Supporters of the garden attempted to halt the development through lawsuits, social media campaigns and public rallies. In June, after years of legal wrangling, the New York State Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the city. Now the garden could be gone as soon as September.

Dylan isn't the only one of his classmates concerned about the garden's imminent demise. For the 575 or so students who attend P.S. 130, Elizabeth Street Garden serves as an extension of the classroom. The elementary school lacks green space, but it is only a 10-minute walk from the garden, allowing for frequent visits and class trips. So the garden has become a de facto playground and nature center where the children can plant seeds, learn about nature and have Easter egg hunts.

In an effort to save their urban oasis, students in first through fourth grade have been writing letters to Mayor Eric Adams, pleading with him to save the garden. The handwritten letters, which were shared with a reporter from The New York Times, are being sent to the mayor's office this week, said Joseph Reiver, Elizabeth Street Garden's executive director. They are filled with endearing misspellings, grammatical errors and wobbly penmanship. But while they may appear juvenile or naïve, the issues they raise are anything but. In their messages, the students touch on themes of climate change and mental health, stressing the importance of green space and clean air.

"Tree's also provide homes for animals like birds, squirrels, and raccoons. This is why we should save the garden!" wrote one student.

Another explained, "The garden adds color and brightness to the city."

Many were concerned about their favorite play space disappearing: "One reson why we should keep the garden is because with all the trees, we can play hide & seek and eat lunch."